

NIPSA'S MISSION

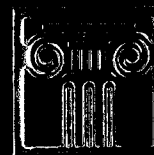
The National Independent Private Schools Association exists to:

- Encourage the accreditation process.
- Recognize, encourage and improve the quality of private school education.
- Engage freely in all lawful activities and efforts that may advance or enhance its goals.
- Provide a structure for the improvement of educational programs
- Develop educational standards for all to emulate.
- Provide a source for consulting services, conferences, workshops and news of mutual interest.
- Establish an educational program to present our views and beliefs to the general public and the educational establishment.



National Independent Private Schools Association

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NIPSA

National Independent Private Schools Association

An Association of
Academic Proprietary Schools

Accredited member of the
**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
PRIVATE SCHOOL
ACCREDITATION**
Member of the
**EDUCATION INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION**

Exhibit 11
DATE 2-12-07
SB 226

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

NIPSA is comprised of owners of private tax-paying preschool, elementary, and secondary schools who are willing to support the purposes, standards, procedures and other requirements of NIPSA.

Schools must:

- Be an individual or entity operating a tax-paying school.
- Have legal authority and appropriate approval to operate.
- Be an academic school consisting of any grades PK-12.
- Be willing to meet all NIPSA criteria, pay all required fees and expenses, attend meetings, and provide information when required.
- Agree to abide by and adhere to the goals and regulations of the organization.
- Be of good character, and meet the requirements of the organization.
- Submit a written application, providing requested school information.
- Conduct and submit a self-study of the total school program, and undergo a site visitation by members of accredited schools, within 3 years of acceptance as a candidate school.

There are two classifications of membership: Candidate School and Accredited Member School. A candidate School is a school that has joined NIPSA but has yet to undertake the accreditation process; an accredited member is a school that has successfully completed the accreditation process.

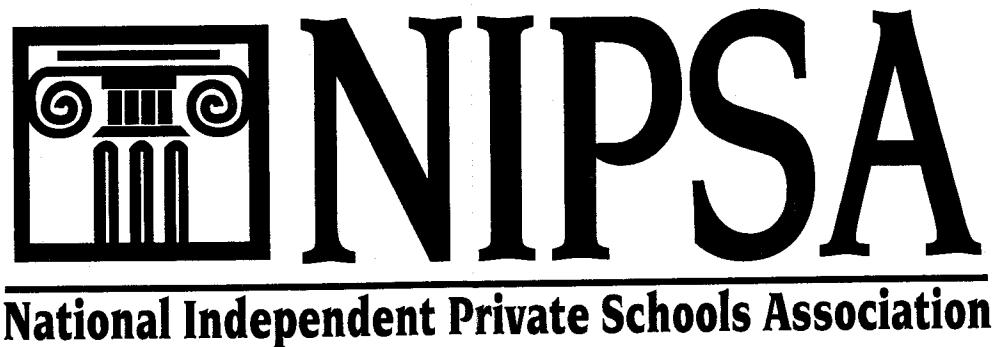
NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

Requirements for Accredited Membership are:

- The school must currently be a Candidate School in good standing (including payment of all dues and student assessment fees).
- The school must complete a self-study of the total school program, including these categories:

A General Description of the School
Philosophy and Goals
Organization and Leadership
Curriculum, Instruction and Learning
Student Activities
School Staff
Parent Community
School Plant and Safety
Finances
Current School Improvement Plan
Early Childhood Program (If applicable)
Boarding School Criteria (Boarding only)
Special Needs Schools (Special Needs Schools Only)

- A visiting committee must perform a site visitation to verify the self-study and to take recommendations to the Board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors must approve the recommendations and commendations of the visiting committee.
- Accredited members shall file a yearly report on the current status of the school.



A school shall be evaluated on the basis of the degree to which it is accomplishing its purposes and functions as outlined in its own statement of objectives and on the appropriateness of those purposes and functions for an institution of its type.

In addition, to qualify for accreditation, a school must give evidence of adequately meeting the following criteria that are established as a general guideline to determine the effectiveness of a school's educational program and services. The report will be verified during a visit by a committee of peers.

The school shall include in its report:

General Data: Statistical information that describes the school and its plant, its community and student body.

Philosophy and Goals: A statement of philosophy, goals and objectives approved by the governing body of the school.

Organization: A clearly defined organizational structure specifying the relationships between and among the administration, staff and students, and the limits of authority and responsibility.

Curriculum: A written program that provides a curriculum guide consisting of course descriptions, and that is consistent with the mission of the school. There shall be adequate instructional resources to implement the curricular program.

Instruction and Learning: An instructional program that addresses the needs of all students and provides teachers and students with ample materials.

Pupil Services and Activities:

Services: There are adequate pupil services to identify the need, interests, aptitude and goals of all students and that provide students with educational, personal, social and career guidance.

Activities: There are appropriate student activity offerings that supplement the formal and informal instruction of the school.

School Staff: The school has a qualified staff of sufficient number to effectively fulfill its responsibilities.

Parent Community: There is a supportive parent community that is encouraged to share its ideas and recommendations.

School Plant: The school plant and physical facilities enable the staff to effectively implement the school program, and the school is in compliance with all state and federal laws, and is adhering to all fire and safety codes and regulations of the community in which it is located.

Finance: Evidence of adequate financial support to provide staff, physical facilities, instructional resources, and other support services necessary to operate an effective educational program.

School Improvement: A school improvement plan must be included. The plan should analyze data from the self-study and other sources to determine the present state of the school and to develop objectives and action plans to improve student learning.

Early Childhood Programs: In addition to the criteria described in the preceding sections, additional criteria, particular to early childhood programs, will be observed. Schools must also meet all local, state and national requirements that may apply to their individual circumstances, and must also meet any state requirements for early childhood programs if the school is participating in a state-supported program.

Boarding Schools: The school must exhibit that care has been taken to plan for and implement policies that provide for the affective development of the child in his or her relationships with adults and other students.

Special Needs Schools: Special Needs schools (schools whose mission, objective, student population and goals require substantially different curriculum and instructional strategies) must report any extraordinary circumstances in addition to the NIPSA accreditation criteria outlined in Sections 1-13 of the *NIPSA Accreditation Manual, Directions for the School*.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

By joining the schools in the National Independent Private Schools Association, you and your school:

- Become recognized as being associated with NIPSA, an organization that is accredited by the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA).
- Become part of a dynamic national organization representing only proprietary schools and their interests.
- Become associated with schools that value professionalism and subscribe to high standards of operation.
- Gain a voice in national councils where educational policy is formed.
- Are kept abreast of the latest developments that affect proprietary schools through newsletters, educational conferences and regional meetings.
- Have opportunities to talk with other proprietors face to face and share challenges and successful ideas.
- Participate in professional development programs on curriculum, educational materials, finance, public relations, student recruitment, personnel management, and other topics. NIPSA also engages professionals of national caliber to share their expertise with you.
- Have input into shaping NIPSA programs, services, and policies, for we not only value your participation, but your counsel as well.

BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

Benefits of accreditation are:

- Recognition by the general public, by peers and by other educational entities of your school's academic excellence.
- Involvement in a national organization that assists owner-operated schools to establish standards of credibility and performance.
- Receiving mentorship in the self-study and evaluation process and serving as a mentor to others.
- Development of a school improvement plan that will give direction to the school community in future years.
- Recognition by the Department of Homeland Security as a school eligible to accept foreign students.
- Earning the opportunity to become accredited by additional accrediting agencies through NIPSA's membership in the National Council for Private School Accreditation.
- Joining a cohort of other accredited schools through which valuable information can be exchanged.

*NIPSA is America's foremost
organization of entrepreneurial,
tax-paying educational institutions*

2/9/07

"A kid does better when he feels the heat than when he sees the light."

"Until you want to stay you're not ready to go."

My son was in a program run by the man who gave us those pearls of wisdom. Paul Clark, who runs Galena Ridge and 20 Peaks. According to a psychiatrist who does extensive work with teenagers that I consulted with those statements reveal two things.

The first statement reveals that the person who made it knows nothing about working with teenagers with emotional or psychological issues.

The second statement reveals someone who is manipulative and possibly prone to cultish behavior, but at a minimum a charlatan.

Nothing prevents this manipulative and incompetent program operator from carrying on and doing business as usual in Montana at this point in time. My son could have gotten legitimate help had a system been in place to eliminate the obviously unqualified programs. Instead, he was in a program that had nothing to offer but an invoice. As long as this is true, this system is broken.

If a disease has a genetic, bacterial, or viral cause, Montana insists that a healer have legitimate credentials. However, if a disease is of the spirit, as with these troubled teens, all healers are welcome, including the self-proclaimed. This is a grave disservice and a moral outrage.

A sad truth in the Troubled Teen industry is that most parents make decisions in moments of desperation when they send their kids to a program. Very few can do the due diligence. Many take the advice of an educational consultant, as I did. It turns out that my consultant had never even done a site visit. She says she didn't know that kids were forced to swim in icy streams in the middle of winter. She says she didn't know that kids were forced to sleep in a barn for extended periods of time and were fed only rice, beans, and oatmeal. She says she didn't know that Joe Fields, the manager of the residential portion of Paul's operation, was a high school drop out. She says she's shocked by what she has found out about the program. She would not say whether or not she was paid a fee for referrals.

The bottom line is that there is an information vacuum in Montana because there is no oversight. Without standards and licensure, Montana is has gotten the good, the bad, and the ugly. While programs like Galena Ridge and 20 Peaks exist in Montana the entire teen help industry is suspect. Educational consultants will stop risking their businesses and reputations when it is safer to recommend programs in other states that insist on responsible standards. One of your largest programs has had enrollment cut in half over the last couple of years. That amounts to millions of dollars leaking away from Montana and into other states.

So I submit to you that Montana has a moral obligation to children and parents, as well as a compelling economic interest, to bring about meaningful oversight of the teen help industry. Senator Schmidt's bill is the correct step at this critical time.

Respectfully,

James Dorrian

~~SUPPORTING~~ SB288